

12. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said trough element has a cross section that is generally U-shaped.

13. An assembly comprising:  
a trough element having a trough opening along a long dimension thereof and two ends perpendicular to said long dimension; and  
a support subassembly coupled to said trough element and adapted to be fixedly attached to an apparatus in a manner that causes said trough opening to generally face said apparatus.

#### R E M A R K S

The drawing was objected to and, in response, the drawing is corrected and submitted herewith, together with two marked up copies. The Examiner's approval of the corrected drawings is respectfully requested.

The specification was objected to and, in response, appropriate amendments are included herein.

Claims 8, 10 and 11 were objected to and, in response, appropriate amendments are included herein.

Claims 1-6, 8-10 and 12 were rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by US Patent 6,158,180 issued to Edwards on December 12, 2000. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Edwards describes a device (20) that is mounted within a panel assembly (10) that forms a room partitioning arrangement. The panel assembly comprises horizontal and vertical members constructed in a grid, with individual panels (5, 5a, 5b) attached to the grid. The device is mounted on a horizontal member and is effectively within the room partitioning arrangement, covered by a panel (5a). See FIG. 5.

Amended claim 1, in contradistinction, defines an assembly that comprises a trough element with supports that attach the trough element so that the trough opening faces the apparatus. The Edwards device 20 does not face the apparatus panel assembly 10 because it is **within it**; and that which is within an apparatus cannot be said to be facing it.

Moreover, the Edwards device 20 contains a trough section and an extended portion that is bent to form a hanger segment that slidably attaches the device onto a horizontal member of the grid; i.e., hangs off the horizontal member of the grid, and one can slide it at will along the horizontal member. In contradistinction, amended claim 1 claims a support subassembly that is fixedly attached to the apparatus.

It is respectfully submitted, therefore, that amended claim 1 is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by the reference and, consequently, claims 2-6, 8-10 and 12 – which depend on claim 1 – are also neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by the reference.

Furthermore, some of the above-mentioned dependent claims contain limitations that themselves serve as a sufficient basis to hold that the claim is not anticipated or rendered obvious by the reference.

For example, amended claim 2, specifies that the support subassembly is adjustable, so as to enable the trough opening to be at an adjustable distance from the apparatus. Device 20 of Edwards has no elements that are adjustable, and certainly no adjustable elements that control the distance of the trough opening from the apparatus. Of course, since the trough opening is never “away from the apparatus,” this statement is valid even if device 20 had some means for adjusting the trough opening from some other reference point. The fact is, though, that device 20 of Edwards has no adjustable elements that control the distance of the trough opening from anything. A parallel argument applies to claim 3.

The Examiner asserts that the supports are adjustable in that the device can be hung on the lower horizontal support member rather than on the upper horizontal member, and that the angle can be adjusted by hung on the front support member rather than on the back support member. Applicants respectfully disagree. Aside from the fact that hanging the device on the front versus on the back does not really change the angle, the essential difference is that where the device is hung is NOT AN ATTRIBUTE OF THE SUPPORT subassembly of device 20, which is what claims 2 and 3 specify.

Considering the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2 and 3 have limitations that independently make the claims patentable over the reference.

As for claim 4, none of the room partitioning arrangement components correspond to the limitation of amended claim 4.

As for amended claim 9, which specifies that the trough element is constructed to be pliable, the Examiner asserts that the trough element may be constructed to be pliable (constructed from a pliable material), citing col. 12, lines 7-8. Applicants respectfully traverse. The cited text merely states that the trough element can be extruded from “plastic or metal.” That, by itself, does not support the assertion that the trough is pliable. There is no teaching in the cited text that the trough element is pliable, or may be pliable, or any suggestion that it may be advantageous, or desired, to have device 20 be pliable. Moreover, it is noted that even if the trough element is constructed from a thin metal, or a thin plastic material, the bends in the trough element make the constructed trough element rigid. See for example, the cross sections of the different embodiments shown in FIGS. 8-3, where the number of bends ranges between 4 and 7, each one of which increases the rigidity of the trough element.

Regarding claim 10, which specifies that the trough element contains slots in the sides “to enable said trough element to be bent in a plane containing a long axis of said trough element and perpendicular to said sides,” the Examiner points to slots 130 and 131 in FIG. 23. Respectfully, these slots are not created “to enable said trough element to be bent” and a close inspection reveals that surface 40 of the trough element in the neighborhood of bent portion 90, and other bends in the trough element, would prevent bending of the trough element as specified in the claim.

Claims 1, 2, 4-9 and 12 were rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by Ismert et al, US Patent 6,402,096. Applicants respectfully traverse.

The Examiner points to a U-shaped element 1 of Ismert et al and support elements 16 and 17 that are adapted to attach to walls that are perpendicular to the long axis of the U-shaped element. Admittedly, the U-shaped element has an opening at the top of the U-shape and, therefore, qualifies as a trough. It qualifies as a trough because any element that has an opening along its long dimension is a trough, by definition of the word “trough”. Any other opening in the trough is, therefore, described in other terms, such as “opening in the trough ends,” or “opening in the trough side.” The “trough opening” term is applicable effectively only to the opening along the long dimension.

Viewed another way, the opening of a trough is the opening that is the *sine qua non* of the trough – the opening that forms the usefulness of the trough (for example, the opening in a trough that provides access to water for cattle). In the vernacular, it is the “business end” of the device.

In order to make the rejection in view of the Ismert et al patent, the Examiner is constrained to assert that the openings at the ends of the trough element are the “trough opening” of claim 1. As explained above, however, those are not the opening of a trough when one speaks of a “trough opening.” Indeed, viewed in the above-mentioned other way, the business end of the Ismert et al opening is the opening at the top of the U of the U-shaped element. That is the trough opening of the Ismert et al element 1.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Ismert et al does not anticipate or render obvious claim 1 because the trough opening of element 1 is NOT facing the apparatus to which the trough element is attached through the support subassembly.

Since claim 1 is not anticipated or rendered obvious by Ismert et al, it is respectfully submitted that claims 2, 4-9 and 12, which depend on claim 1, are also not anticipated or rendered obvious by Ismert et al.

In addition, claim 4 is amended herein to specify that the frame, is one to which electronic/optical equipment is attached (equipment that contains electrical components, or optical components, or both), but the Ismert et al trough is “installed between two wall studs” col. 5, lines 17-18. Wall studs may be considered as a frame of a house, but they are not a frame to which electronic/optical equipment is attached.

As for claims 5-9, the Examiner points to detents in the Ismert et al trough element, and asserts that the detents include flexible components 10 and 15, citing col. 7, lines 59-60. Element 15 is the detent in the outer channel of the trough element, and element 10 is the detent in the inner channel of the trough element. They are constructed as an integral part of the trough element channels, and they are not pliable, i.e., contrary to the Examiner’s assertion. Indeed, the text cited by the Examiner actually demonstrates that the detents are NOT pliable. That is, the cited text addresses the fact that a separate base portion is forced downward and is distorted by the force exerted by the unyielding elements 10 and 15, through gripping steps 32 and 33. It is the distorted element 71 that is pliable.


As for supports 16 and 17, they are not the trough element. They are the supports, which are apparently integrally formed with the U-shaped trough element. Still, they are not the trough element itself. Even accepting the possibility that wall thickness of the trough is thin enough to be bendable, the multiple bends along the long axis of the trough (between bottom surface 11 and side surfaces 12 and 13, between side surface 12 and its detent 15, and between side surface 13 and its detent 15) make the trough non-pliable. This is especially true when the inner channel of the trough is inserted into the outer channel of the trough. Indeed, since element 1 of Ismert intends to support a weight (through pipes 25), being pliable -- for the trough element -- is an attribute that is precisely NOT desired.

New claim 13 is added. It is similar to claim 1, but explicitly specifies that the trough opening is other than the trough ends (apropos of the above arguments regarding the Ismert et al reference). It is believed claim that 13 is clearly allowable over the prior art.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, applicants believe that all of the Examiner's objections and rejections have been overcome. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 10-13 are respectfully solicited.

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**Appendix – Marked Up Version of Changes Made**IN THE SPECIFICATION:

*Please replace the paragraph that begins at page 2, line 26, with:*

FIG. 3 presents one embodiment of a fiber support assembly in accord with the principles of this invention. Primarily, it comprises trough element 100 with sides 101 and 103, and bottom 102. The opening of the trough, opposite side 102, is partially closed off by side 104. Two support members, each formed to have surfaces 110, 111, and 112 that are bent relative to each other, and are attached to trough 100, spaced apart from each other by a preselected distance. Trough 100 and the two support members can be made of the same material, such as aluminum, or relatively rigid plastic, and the support members are attached to trough 100 in an appropriate manner. For example, when the material used is aluminum, the support members may be spot-welded, or screwed, to side 103 of trough 100. The angles that surface 111 is made to have with respect to surfaces 110 and 112 are such that when surface 110 is in the vertical plane (the plane formed by axes y and x), surface 112 and sides 101 and 103 are roughly in the horizontal plane (defined by axes x and z), resulting in the trough opening being roughly in the vertical plane. It should be understood that the purposes of trough 100 are served well even when the opening of trough element 100 [f] is somewhat away from the vertical plane; for example, away by 20 degrees. Surface 110 includes a number of holes 120 adapted for attaching the entire FIG. 3 assembly to a frame of equipment modules, or to equipment modules themselves.

*Please replace the two paragraphs beginning at page 5, line 3 with:*

The above disclosed the principles of this invention, but it should be realized that various modifications and alterations can be made by those who are skilled in the art without departing from the spirit of this invention. For example, FIG. 3 employs a partial wall 104 as a detent means. FIG. 7 presents a more positive detent means in the form of outer ridges 111 and 112 on sides 101 and 103, and a detent clip 115 that includes corresponding ridges 116 and 117. When clip 115 is snapped into the opening of trough 100, ridges 116 and 117 interlock with ridges 111 and 112 to prevent clip [105] 115 from snapping off, but clip [105] 115 can easily slide along the long axis of trough 100. The

sliding movement prevents fibers that are inserted in trough 100 from assuming a bending radius of less than a pre-selected value.

FIG. 8 presents yet another detent means, which builds on the FIG. 3 trough. A strip, which comprises a plastic snap portion [106] 126 to which a neoprene wiper portion [105] 125 is attached, is snapped onto the respective edges of sides 101 and 104. As depicted in FIG. 8, the two wiper portions allow easy placement of fibers into trough 100, but make it difficult for fibers to come out.

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. An assembly comprising:  
a trough element having a trough opening along a long dimension thereof and two ends perpendicular to said long dimension; and  
a support subassembly [supports] coupled to said trough element and adapted to be fixedly attached to an apparatus in a manner that causes said trough opening to generally face said apparatus.
2. The assembly of claim 1 where said support[s are] subassembly is adjustable to enable said trough opening to be at an adjustable distance from said apparatus.
3. The assembly of claim 1 where said supports are adjustable to enable said trough opening to be at an adjustable angle relative to said apparatus.
4. The assembly of claim 1 where said apparatus is a frame to which equipment that contains electronic components, or optical components, or both (electronic/optical equipment) is attached, a[n equipment] rack to which electronic/optical equipment is attached or on which electronic/optical equipment is placed, or an electronic/optical equipment module.
5. The assembly of claim 1 further comprising one or more detent components that are physical extensions of said trough element.

6. The assembly of claim 1 further comprising detent elements associated with said trough opening.

7. The assembly of claim 6 where said detent elements include flexible components.

8. The assembly of claim 1 further comprising one or more detent elements that are coupled to said trough element.

9. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said trough element is constructed [from a] to be pliable [material].

10. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said trough element includes [slats] slots in sides of said trough element to enable said trough element to be bent in a plane containing a long axis of said trough element and perpendicular to said sides.

11. The assembly of claim 1 where said trough element includes [slats] slots in bottom of said trough element to enable said trough element to be bent in a plane containing a long axis of said trough element and perpendicular to said bottom.

12. The assembly of claim 1 wherein said trough element [is tubular, with] has a cross section that is generally U-shaped.

Please add the following claim: --

13. An assembly comprising:  
a trough element having a trough opening along a long dimension thereof and two ends perpendicular to said long dimension; and  
a support subassembly coupled to said trough element and adapted to be fixedly attached to an apparatus in a manner that causes said trough opening to generally face said apparatus.

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